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Geographic Support Project

NEW ETHNIC MAP OF CHINA



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The publication of Map of the Peoples of China, MNR [Mongolian People's Republic], and Korea* at 1:5,000,000, with an accompanying 41-page explanatory pamphlet, provides not only the most recent but also the best single source of information on the ethnography of these Far Eastern countries. The map, which was compiled by the Soviet scholar S.I. Bruk, was published in 1959 by the Institute of Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR in collaboration with the Main Administration of Geodesy and Cartography (GUGK). Through the use of an effective technique, the map shows the present locations and relative numbers of the constituent peoples of Mongolia and the minority peoples of China, treated as distinct components of the total population. The accompanying pamphlet supplements the map by supplying useful population statistics on minority peoples by provinces as well as extensive, though not exhaustive, nomenclature for subgroupings, along with informative comment on historical and locational factors that have contemporary relevance.

Many longstanding gaps in intelligence can now be filled in by information included on the ethnic map. For example, it depicts the nation-wide distribution of the Hui (Chinese Moslems) with, for the first time, a plausible indication of the extent of their areas of settlement. It clearly locates the areas of distinctly Manchu settlement remaining in Hopeh and in Manchuria. The compiler is impressively successful in handling the complex pattern of racial intermingling in Sinkiang; and for southwest China the locations of the 30-odd racial groups found in 4 provinces are clearly depicted in an intricate mosaic of numbers and colors. Although the Tu-chia in Western Hunan are treated as being no longer identified with the Miao, the map continues to show as separate entities the Sha and the Nung, two peoples that the Chinese Communists now officially group with the Chuang. The inclusion of Korea on this map adds little to its value. Korea has no appreciable minority population, and the map of population density contributes nothing to available information.

When used in connection with other maps that show physical, administrative, and communications features, the map is detailed enough to be useful in the preparation of regional and local studies of less densely populated areas in China. It will be equally useful in the preparation of more generalized and simpler maps covering China as a whole. A 4-degree net of geographic coordinates with 30-second intervals indicated along the border is valuable in making locational correlations between this map and others that present related information. Boundaries of first-order administrative subdivisions and a fairly

* The map is available at the CIA Map Library under Call No. 125839. The accompanying pamphlet has been translated into English as JPRS 3710, 16 Aug 60, and may be purchased through the Photoduplication Service of the Library of Congress, Washington 25, D.C. This new Soviet ethnic map of China is more useful for research on the population of local areas than the only available Chinese Communist population-distribution map, one that is based on the 1953 census and lacks adequate detail. The Soviet map unquestionably supersedes the best available ethnic map of China published by the Chinese Communists, which is merely a 1956 wall map with no refinement of detail.

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well-developed hydrographic pattern are also helpful. Although physical features other than hydrography are not indicated, the compiler has carefully related the ethnic data to physical features that influence patterns of population density. Therefore, the map can be used in conjunction with maps that include physical features, roads, and railroads.

Through a skillful combination of standard cartographic techniques, the compiler has succeeded in showing not only the distribution but also the population density of 59 peoples under 11 major ethnic or linguistic groupings. By combining distinctive colors and lines, eight population-density categories are differentiated. Particularly noteworthy is the success with which the population densities of two peoples living within a single area have been presented. The fact that the method does not work well for areas in which three or more peoples live is unimportant because, with the exception of urban localities, the map includes few such areas.

For minority areas, many of which have a relatively sparse population, the density categories provide a meaningful interpretation of population densities by distinct ethnic groups. For the more general purpose of mapping population density as such, however, the 8 categories used are awkwardly divided -- 5 categories for population densities below 200 inhabitants per square kilometer and only 3 categories (201-700, 701-2,000, and over 2,000) for densities above that figure. Thus only a generalized picture that does not effectively depict the varied density pattern is presented for the densely populated parts of China Proper and Manchuria. The use of these 3 categories, however, serves to highlight the current foci of urbanization, especially in Manchuria. The extent of uninhabited areas has been worked out, according to the compiler, on the basis of general physical factors affecting habitability. It is possible that, if more information were available, still larger areas would have to be mapped as uninhabited, because the continuing decline of nomadism as a way of life necessarily means a slow contraction of the extent of the lands occupied by nomads, especially in Mongolia.

The generally high technical quality of the map makes doubly conspicuous a strange lapse in the legend, where Chinese characters are furnished for the names of the 59 peoples. Apparently, standard type was not available for 19 of these names and the characters were written in by an unmistakably non-Chinese hand. It is surprising that competent calligraphic assistance for this small task that could have been performed by any Chinese student was not readily available to the compiler.

Chinese Communist sources acknowledged by the compiler in the accompanying pamphlet include (1) the two Chinese maps mentioned in the footnote on page 1; (2) certain medium-scale maps produced for provincial and regional committees on nationalities affairs, which show the distribution of minorities in China's southern provinces; (3) the 1953 census reports of nationalities; (4) some later statistical data; and (5) additional recent reports and monographs. For West China and Mongolia the standard works of travelers, mostly Soviet, are cited; but, for Manchuria, only 2 reports are cited, the

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most recent of which is 25 years old. Before publication, the map in manuscript form was critically reviewed in Peking and K'un-ming by students, instructors, party leaders, and other persons who were involved in minorities affairs. The data included on the map for Sinkiang and Mongolia seem to be reliable. Sources cited for ethnic Tibet are either old or weak, probably because ethno-linguistic research on Tibetans does not appear to have kept abreast of that done on other peoples ruled by the Chinese.

The intrusion of ideologically slanted points of view in the text and on the map is not blatant. International borders conform to those shown on other recent Soviet maps. Probably for political reasons the compiler has made a professionally barbarous concession to the Chinese Communists in his treatment of the Mongolian minority in China. On the Mongolian side of the border, three Mongolian peoples -- Khalkas, Oirats, and Buryats -- are identified on the map by a pale bluish-green color. On the Chinese side (where two-thirds of the Mongols in Asia live), all Mongolian peoples are lumped under the label "Mongolians of the PRC," and are identified by a distinctive tone of pure green. Fortunately the accompanying pamphlet furnishes additional information on China's Mongols of the type that should have been mapped to give a balanced picture. Another example of the compiler's efforts to please the Chinese Communists is the strained inclusion of a small inset map showing the group of tiny islands, reefs, cays, and shoals that collectively are sometimes called the Spratly Islands. Because the scale is too small to permit the use of color on the inset, the legend key numeral "1" has been used to indicate that a few Han Chinese are established in the Spratlys.

Intelligence officers will discover that this map was designed for more than casual use. Because its companion maps on nearby areas* provide information that was already available in the West, they are of little intelligence significance, despite their intrinsic quality. For China and Mongolia, however, the new map provides a broad and reasonably reliable background, in locational context, of ethnic information that was not previously available in the West.

* Map of the Peoples of Hindustan [in Russian], 1:5,000,000, GUGK, 1956 (CIA Map Library Call No. 103978); Map of the Peoples of Indochina [in Russian], 1:5,000,000, GUGK, 1959 (CIA Map Library Call No. 126205).

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